

Academic Support and Post-secondary Planning

Developed by:
Educational Access Project for DCFS
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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Center for Child Welfare and Education

Educational Access Project for DCFS

Objectives

- ▣ Increase knowledge of how to determine academic achievement for individual students
- ▣ Increase knowledge of what to do when students are struggling
- ▣ Increase knowledge of the process for planning for post-secondary success.
- ▣ Increase knowledge of DCFS post-secondary programs



Part One

Determining the Academic Achievement for Students



Ways to Determine Achievement



Report Cards



Conferences or
Teacher Reports



Standardized Tests

Ways to Determine Achievement



Discipline Issues



Student 's Self
Report



Others?

Part Two

Strategies to Assist Students Who are Struggling



Determine Why the Student is Struggling

- ▣ Discuss with the student, the caregivers and the school to determine the issues that contribute to the student struggling in school.
- ▣ Review what steps have already been taken to help the student.
- ▣ If the student has the effects of childhood trauma, share with the caregivers and school as appropriate.
- ▣ Seek assistance from Education Advisor as needed

Reasons Why a Student May be Struggling

Common reasons may be:

Poor attendance/truancy

Not understanding school material

Behavioral issues

Not returning homework

School work not modified or accommodated

Others?

Poor Attendance

- ▣ Determine reasons for frequent absences.
- ▣ Help develop a schedule that will allow the student to get to school on time and how to notify the school of excused absences.
- ▣ Students should not be removed from school for family and sibling visits. If unavoidable, document on CFS 492.
- ▣ Determine if there are medical reasons for extensive absences. Make sure school work is coordinated with the hospital and credit is given.

Poor Attendance: Truancy

- ▣ A student who has unexcused absences for 5% or more school days is truant.
- ▣ Discuss the possible reasons for truancy with the student and problem solve.
- ▣ Most schools have truancy programs to assist students. Check with the local district to obtain assistance.

Behavioral Issues

- ▣ Discuss with the school and student what the behavioral issues are and determine if this is an isolated incident.
- ▣ If this is an ongoing problem, there are formal and informal strategies on how to address the student's behavior.
- ▣ An informal strategy is to discuss the issues with the student and school and determine a plan for improved behavior. Review the school discipline policy with the student.
- ▣ A formal strategy would be to develop a behavioral intervention plan through IDEA, Section 504 or RtI.
- ▣ Include the student in developing his/her plan.

Behavioral Interventions

- ▣ Students may have a Behavioral Intervention Plan through RtI, Section 504 or an IDEA
- ▣ Behavioral Intervention Plans are to be individualized and not based on a classroom plan.
- ▣ If a student has a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP), review the plan, determine if is being implemented and revise, if needed.
- ▣ If a BIP doesn't exist, request a Functional Behavioral Assessment be completed and then develop the BIP.
- ▣ Set up timelines for reviewing and updating the BIP.

Not Understanding School Material

- ▣ Determine if it is from lack of schooling.
- ▣ Review past performance.
- ▣ Discuss what, if any, strategies have been tried.
- ▣ If you suspect the student has a disability that would make him/her eligible for special education, make a referral.
- ▣ If uncertain, ask the school to provide supports through RtI.
- ▣ Determine follow-up dates to review progress.

Tutoring

- ▣ Review if current school plans need to be modified to address the need.
- ▣ It is a discretionary service by the school. Ask if a program exists.
- ▣ If no school tutoring program exists, DCFS may purchase this service upon :
 - Written recommendation by the student's teacher.
 - After all other resources have been exhausted.
- ▣ Reasons for tutoring include:
 - Needs remedial help upon entering care or changing schools.
 - Currently has failing grades or has been retained.
 - Recommended to compensate for extended absences from school.

Special Education or Section 504 Services

Ask for IEP or 504 meeting and review:

- If the plan being implemented and necessary school staff aware of and following the plan.
- If the goals are appropriate and address all areas in which the student has deficits.
- Are the current modifications and/or accommodations meeting the student's needs?
- Are the student's grades determined based on the modifications and accommodations?
- Is homework being modified and/or accommodated?
- Are there other evaluations or assessments needed to determine why the student is struggling?

Homework Not Turned In or Completed

Develop a schedule for completing homework, process for knowing what homework is coming home and checking that the homework goes back to school.

Using check lists for homework, books and needed school supplies often helps.

Find out if the school has homework assignments on line.

Make sure the homework is modified or accommodated based on the student's 504 or IEP plan.

Homework, cont'd.

For some students, extra checking may be necessary to coordinate with the school for assistance.

Determine a plan to monitor if it is being turned in successfully. Don't wait for the student's grades to reflect it.

Student may need to have a school person to touch base with before/after school.

Helpful Suggestions



Develop good pathways of communication between school, home and DCFS/POS.

Address issues as early as possible. Don't wait to ask for help.

Involve the student as much as possible in identifying issues and developing.

Make sure any and all plans are individualized and everyone involved knows what their role is.

Use good communication skills.

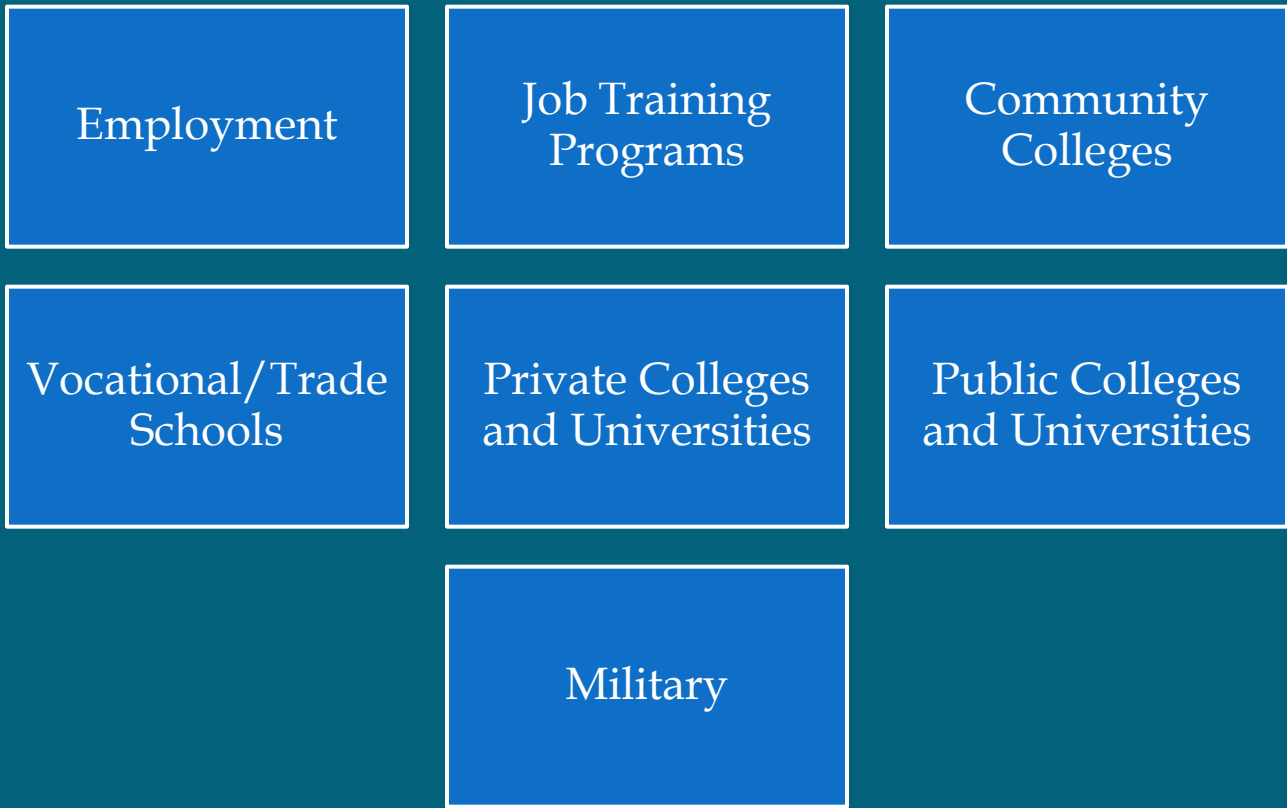
Part Three

Post-secondary Planning



Planning for Life After High School

There are many options after high school:



Transition Planning

Assist student to determine preferences and interests related to post-secondary life.

1.

Use results to develop post high school vision in the form of an outcome statement.

2.

Conduct planning meeting and complete transition goals and needed services based on the post high school vision.

3.

School Transition Plans and DCFS Planning
Need to be Coordinated.

Why Student Centered Planning?

- ▣ The plan is more relevant.
- ▣ Drives finding the appropriate program .
- ▣ Ownership increases the likelihood of the plan be followed.
- ▣ The process helps identify strengths of the student as well as gaps that need to be addressed.
- ▣ Long lasting benefit of learning to be able to identify their goals, strengths and needs.
- ▣ It works!

Assists Students to:

Know their strengths

Be able to discuss what their needs are

Identify needed accommodations

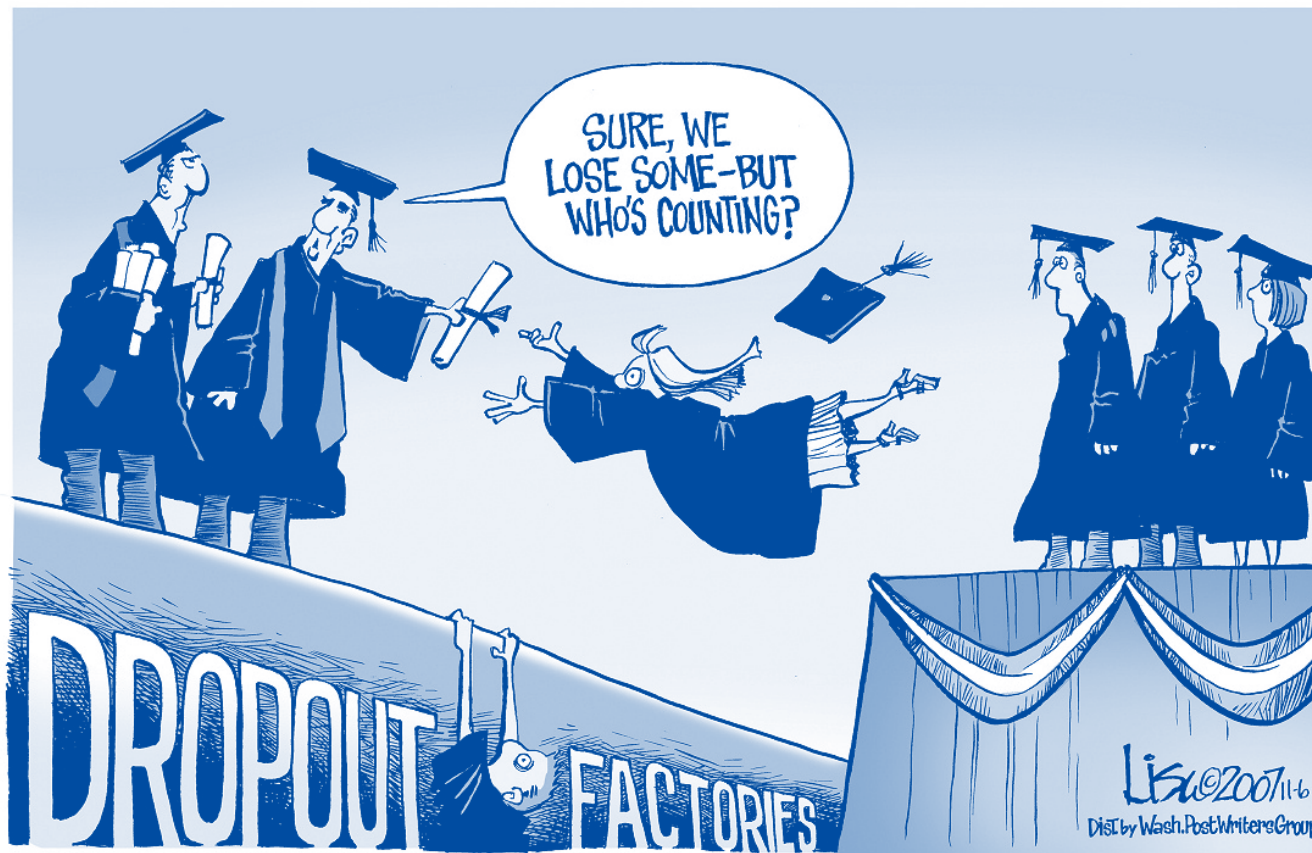
Learn to speak for themselves

Develop decision-making skills

Know their options

Be the driving force

Alternatives For Students Who Do Not Graduate High School



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Students who fail to meet graduation requirements

Students who cannot reach required credits for graduation by age 21 can attend an alternative program or complete a General Education Development (GED) program

- ▣ Some districts will pay for alternative schools (e.g., Ombudsman)
- ▣ EdOptions is a fully accredited on-line program available through DCFS
- ▣ GED Programs are available after age 17

GED Illinois Online Program

- ▣ ONLINE GED: <http://www.gedillinois.org/>
 - Alternative to classroom instruction
 - Access anytime day or night
- ▣ Program Requirements:
 - 10th Grade reading level
 - 7th Grade math level
- ▣ Indicators for success:
 - Self-directed learner
 - Self-motivated learner
- ▣ Also available on CD-ROM for those without internet access

Adult Basic Education (ABE)

- ▣ Adult Basic Education programs help people with skill levels below 8th grade.
 - ABE Students may improve in reading, writing and mathematics.
- ▣ Upon completion of ABE, adults can pursue a GED certificate.
- ▣ The Illinois Adult Learning Hotline (800-321-9511) is a statewide referral system which links prospective students or volunteers to local literacy and ABE programs.

Part IV



College Planning

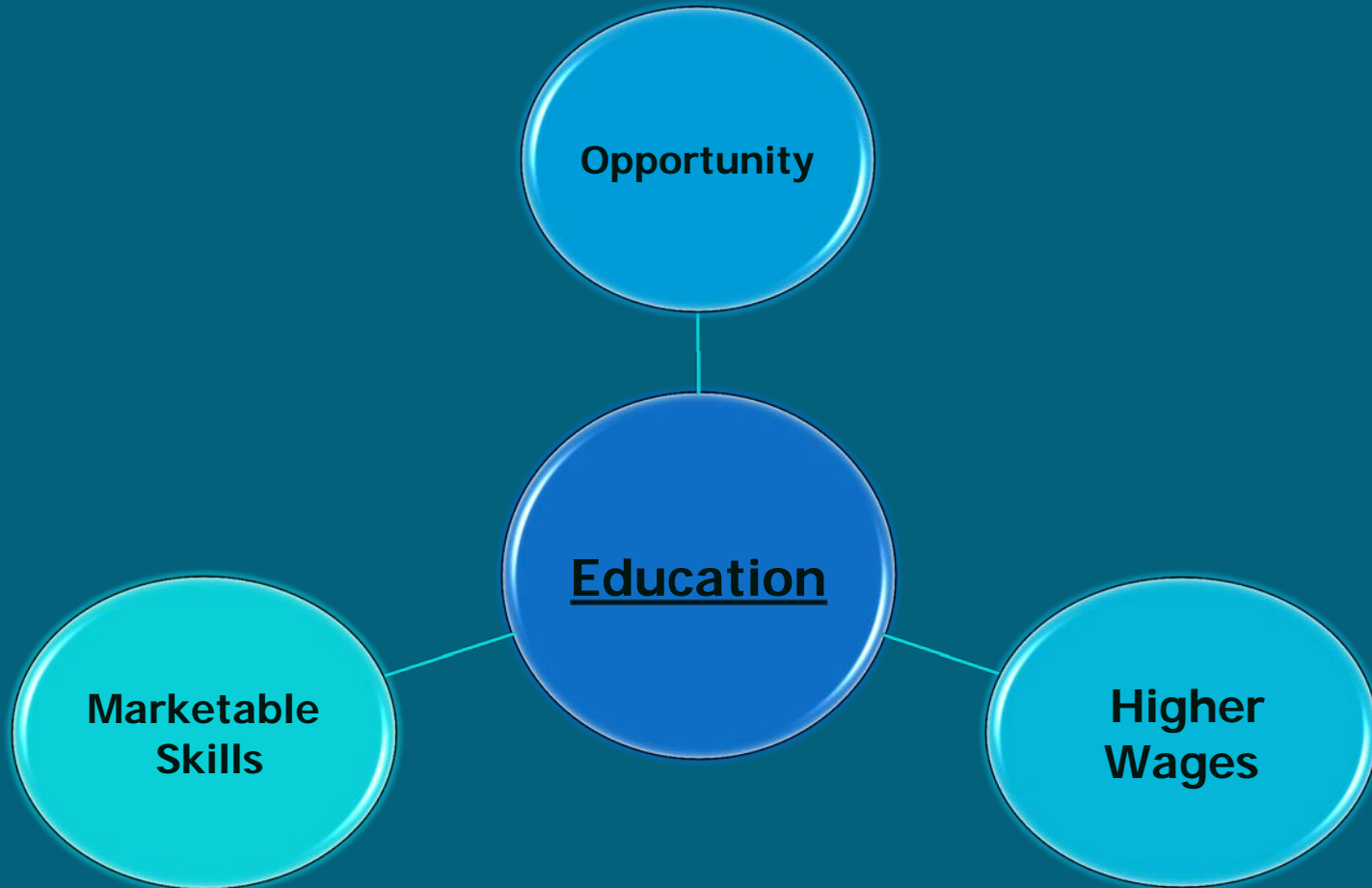
It is never too early to start planning...



"THE U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT GUIDE TO AMERICA'S TOP 500 COLLEGES... CHAPTER ONE..."

Vision

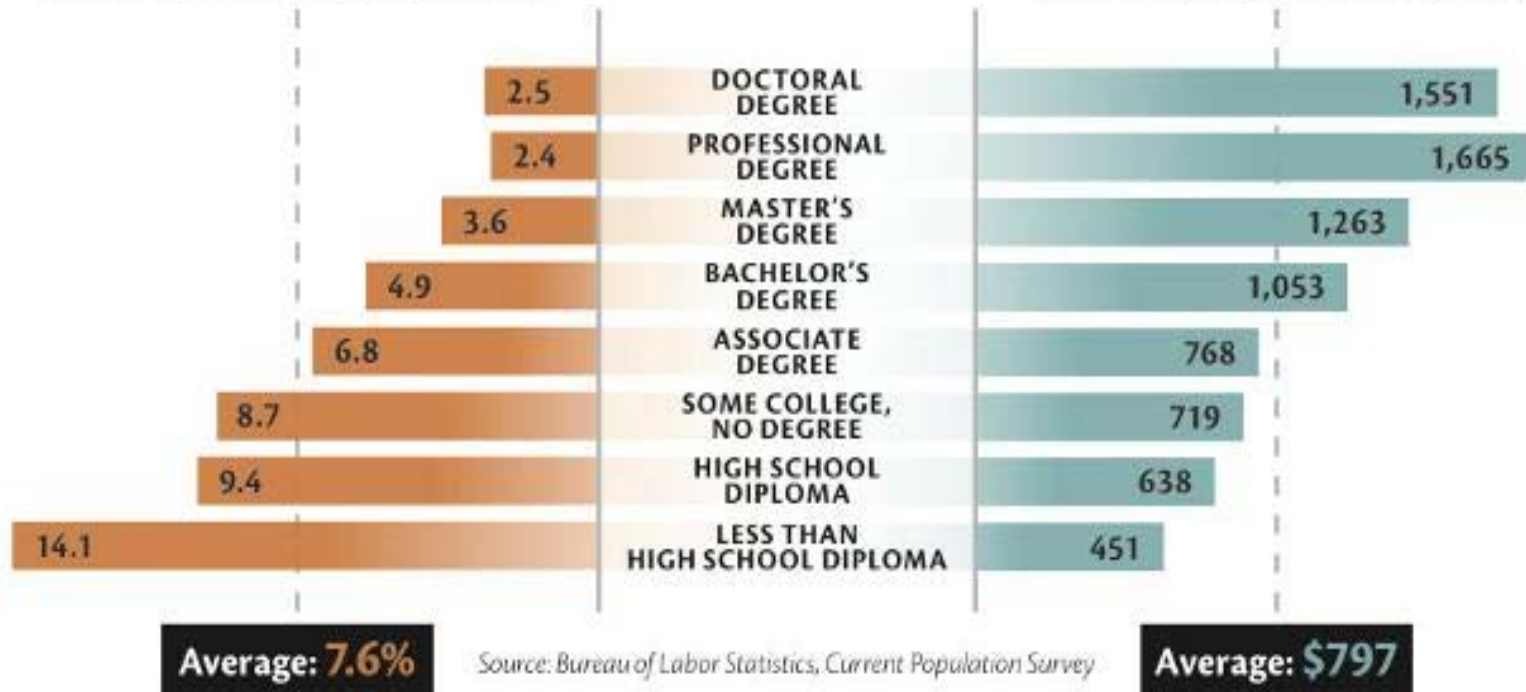
“Understanding the Importance of Higher Education.”



EDUCATION PAYS

Unemployment rate
in 2011 (in %)

Median weekly earnings
in 2011 (in \$)



College Planning for High School



Key Factors in College Planning

Goal setting for academic success

Planning for the future

Grades

Extracurricular activities/clubs

Study skills & homework structure

Resources (tutoring, study hall, etc.)

College planning checklist

Communication (counselors, caregiver, NIU Education Advisors, etc.)

Annual High School Academic Plan (AHSAP)

- ▣ Caseworker complete during AHSAP Meeting, August through October
- ▣ Used to review/evaluate academic progress, support academic achievement, and ensure preparedness for college or vocational training
- ▣ Include caseworkers, youth, caregivers, school counselors and other relevant school staff
- ▣ Should be completed each year from Freshman to Senior Year

Strategic Planning for Student in Freshman Year

- ▣ Get to know counselor
- ▣ Extracurricular activities
- ▣ Manage time
- ▣ Learn about college cost and financial aid process
- ▣ Consider college preparatory curriculum
- ▣ Attend area college fairs
- ▣ Start building student's profile at

www.whatsnextillinois.org

Strategic Planning for Student in Sophomore Year

- ▣ Stay involved in extracurricular activities
- ▣ Talk to counselors and teachers about SAT/ACT
- ▣ Register early for required tests
- ▣ Visit college fairs
- ▣ Continue working on student's profile at www.whatsnextillinois.org

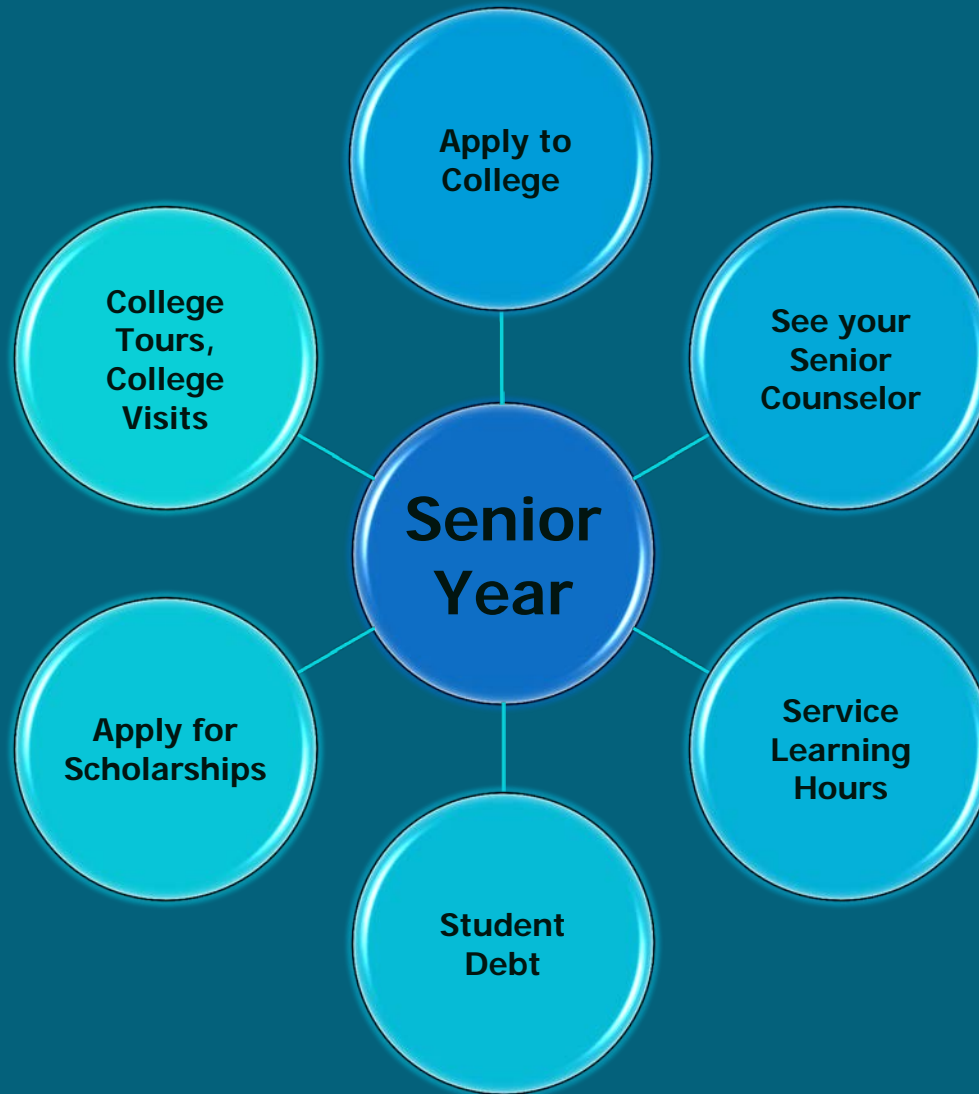
Strategic Planning for Students in Junior Year

- ▣ Study hard (grades help or hurt college admission)
- ▣ Continue extracurricular activities
- ▣ Volunteer
- ▣ Explore college websites
- ▣ Register & take the PSAT/ACT
- ▣ Students with IEP or 504 Plan may request accommodations including extended test taking time
- ▣ Contact colleges for applications and required essay topics
- ▣ Continue working on student's profile at www.whatsnextillinois.org

Strategic Planning for Students in Senior Year

- ▣ Consult with teachers and counselor
- ▣ Finalize college list
- ▣ Note deadlines
- ▣ Take required tests
- ▣ Submit college applications
- ▣ Continue working on student's profile at www.whatsnextillinois.org

College Planning



Key Things Students Must Complete 1st Semester of Senior Year

- ▣ Gather applications for schools of interest
- ▣ Request student's debt balance
 - Ask for school waiver forms for college applications
- ▣ Request recommendation letters
- ▣ Write personal statement

- ▣ Re-take ACT test if needed
- ▣ Consult with counselor or College and Career Center
 - Find out admission criteria for top schools
 - Evaluate transcripts, re-take classes if needed
 - Confirm fulfillment of Service Learning Hours requirements

Special Considerations for Students with Disabilities



Students with Disabilities

- ❑ Equal opportunity for all students. Students with a disability have access to a college education.
- ❑ Colleges provide accommodations and related resources to address barriers for students with disability.
- ❑ Ensure college of choice has an office of disability.
- ❑ Request a copy of most current IEP/504 plan as well as the Summary of Performance for those with an IEP.
- ❑ Be prepared to share IEP or 504 Plan with counselor at the office of disability at the college/university.

Students with Disabilities Summary of Performance

- ▣ Summary of academic achievements and functional performance, and recommendations on how to assist in meeting post-secondary goals
- ▣ Prepared and provided during final year in high school
- ▣ Can include input from student and parent
- ▣ SOP is for the student/family use
- ▣ School to keep a copy

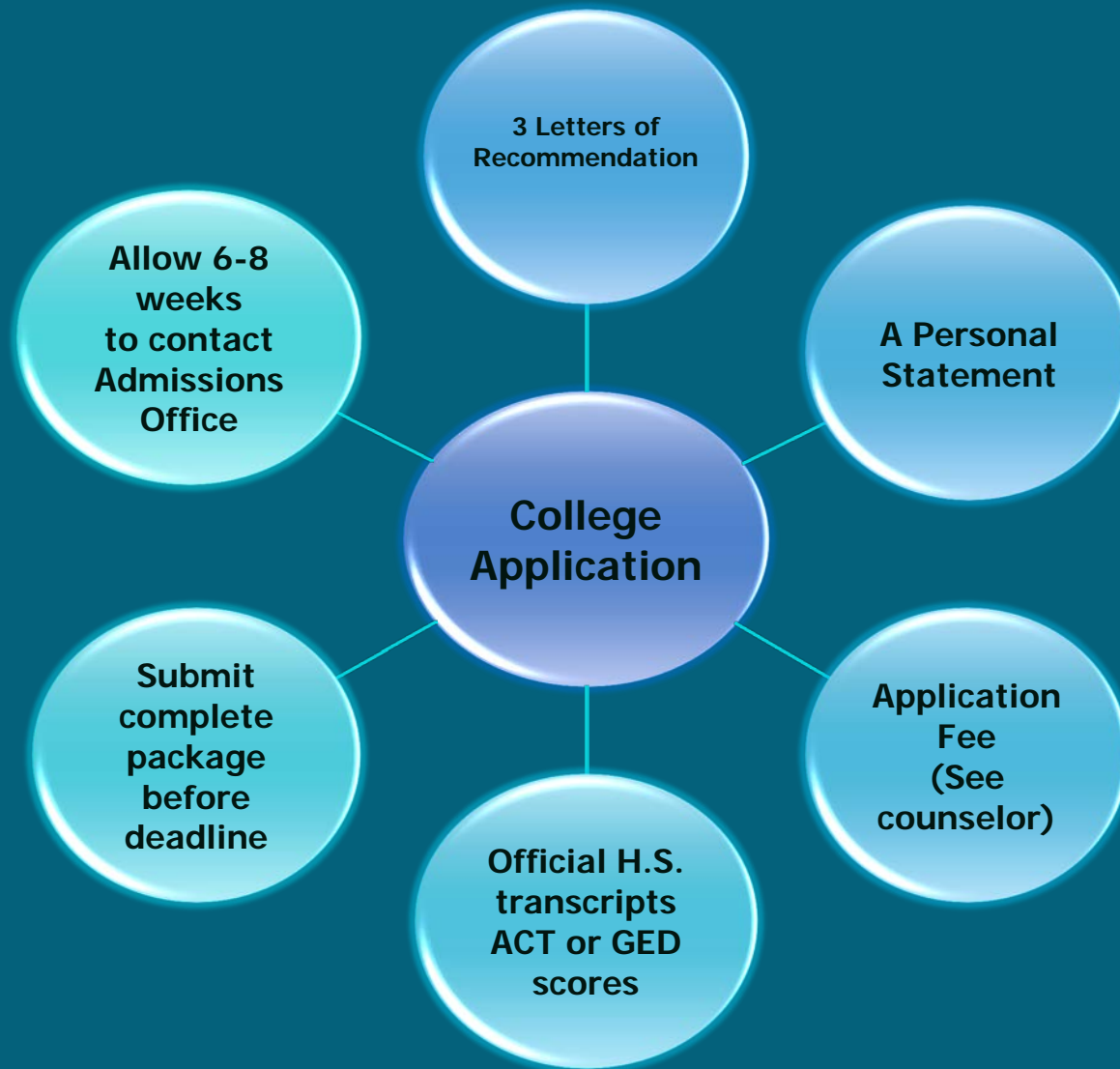
Students with Disabilities

- ▣ IEP is a legal document used Pre-K to Grade 12
- ▣ Students with disabilities must self identify to the college
- ▣ Information from the IEP/504 plan may be helpful in determining supports needed for success
- ▣ Additional tests may be required to assess needs and develop appropriate accommodations



What does
your future
look like?

Criteria for Admission



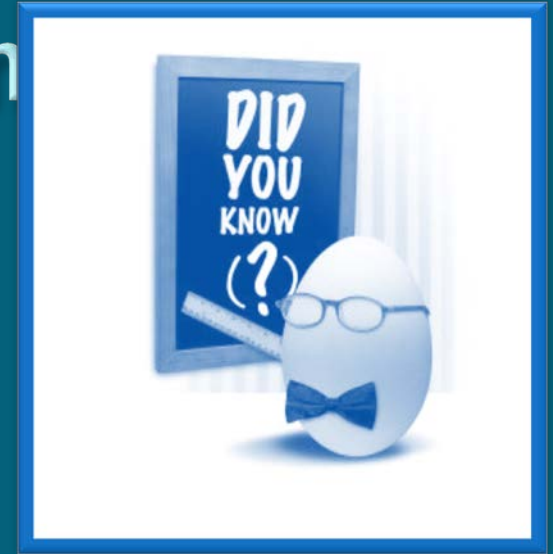
Alternative Admissions Programs

- ▣ Provide college access to:
 - Students from underrepresented and/or disadvantaged groups
 - Students who experience obstacles to fulfill general admissions requirements

- ▣ Make additional resources and support available to the students

Alternative Admission Programs

- ▣ Eastern Illinois University
 - ▣ Gateway Program
- ▣ Northeastern Illinois University
 - ▣ Project Success (African American Students)
 - ▣ Proyecto Pa'Lante (Hispanic Students)
- ▣ Northern Illinois University
 - ▣ Deacon Davis CHANCE Program
- ▣ University of Illinois at Chicago
 - ▣ African American Network Program
 - ▣ Latin American Recruitment and Educational Services Program (LARES)



Acceptance to a University

If student accepts the admissions offer, he/she should

Register to attend orientation

Pay the orientation and housing fees

Submit up-to-date immunization records

Submit all required documents to complete financial aid

Meet the deadline for notification of school attendance

Acceptance to Community College or Vocational School

Before enrolling for classes, student must:

- ▣ Submit all required documents to process financial aid before the first day of classes
- ▣ Register to attend orientation
- ▣ Register for placement test (if the student score below 21 on the ACT)
- ▣ Fill out the Community College Payment Program application (CFS 407-3)

Applying for Financial Aid



College is an
investment for your
future.

Basic Funding Available to DCFS Students

FAFSA Related Funding

F – Free

A – Application

F – Federal

S – Student

A – Aid

DCFS related assistance

- ▣ School related costs
 - ▣ Youth in Scholarship tuition and mandatory fee waiver
 - ▣ Community College Payment Program (CCPP)
 - ▣ Education and Training Voucher(ETV)
- ▣ Housing cost assistance
 - ▣ Youth in Scholarship (YIS)
 - ▣ Youth in College/Vocational Training (YIC/VT)
 - ▣ Transitional Living Program (TLP) or Independent Living Arrangement (ILO) Placements

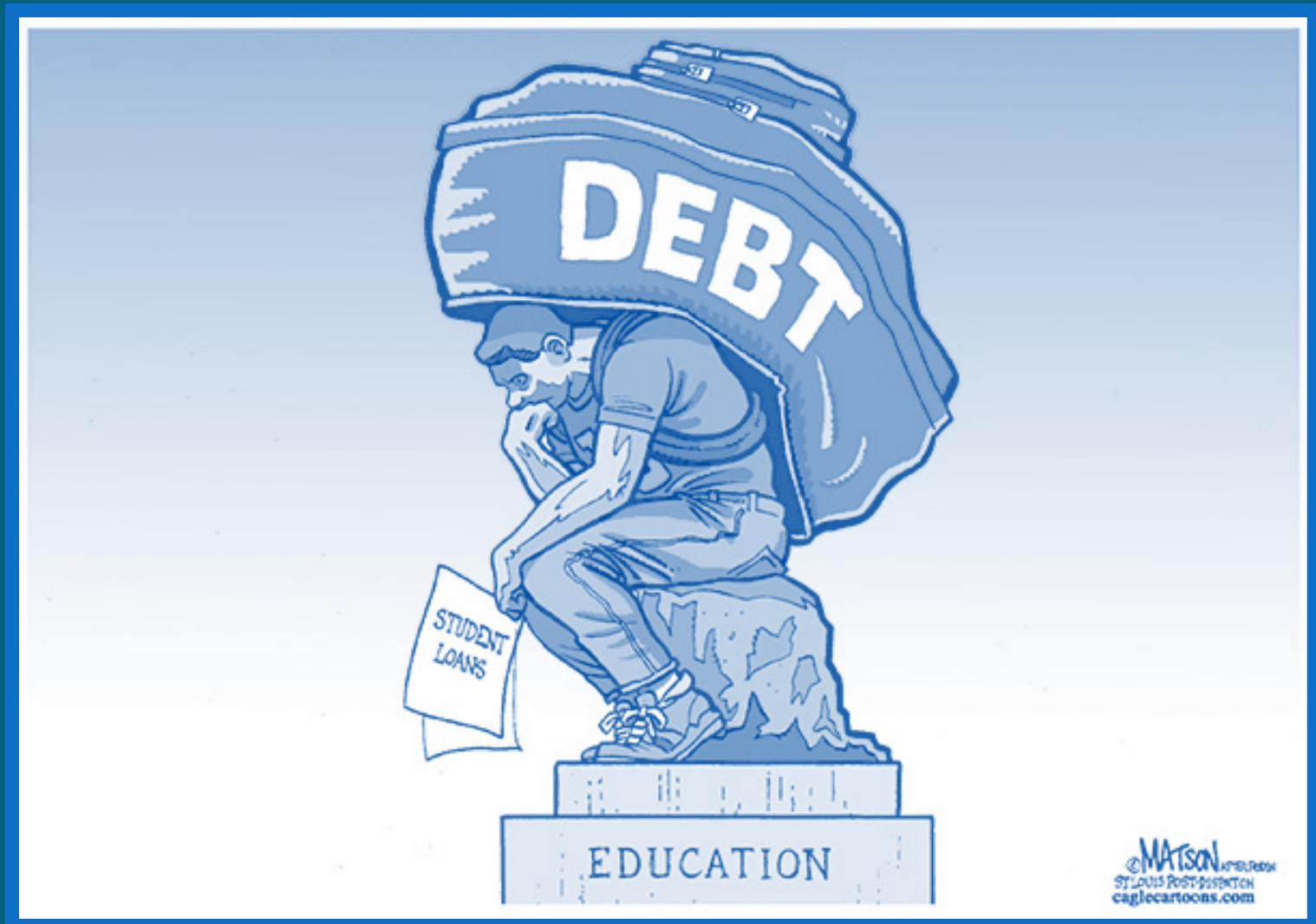
FAFSA related funding

- ▣ All DCFS funding supplements FAFSA related funding
- ▣ FAFSA must be filed annually beginning the senior year in high school
- ▣ File by January 15 each year (as soon after January 1 as possible)
- ▣ Students may be required to go through 'verification' process at school to actually receive FAFSA related funding
- ▣ Students may be asked to go through a verification process and will need to be prepared to provide court records to the school documenting their current or previous relationship with DCFS

What Youth Get from FAFSA Filing

- ❑ Pell grant each semester for minimum of 12 credit hours in school
- ❑ Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) at 4 year college based on need and school
- ❑ Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG)
- ❑ Federal Work Study
- ❑ Subsidized & Unsubsidized Direct Loans
- ❑ Monetary Award Program (MAP) each semester based on 15 credit hours

Student Loans can be a Mound of Debt



Types of Loans



Direct Subsidized Loan:

- ▣ Student not charged interest while enrolled in school at least half-time.

Direct Unsubsidized Loan:

- ▣ Not required to demonstrate financial need.
- ▣ Can pay interest while enrolled in school.
- ▣ If students choose not to pay the interest as it accrues, this will increase the total amount to be repaid.

DCFS Education Programs

Getting There!



Service Intervention, A Division of the
Illinois Department of Children & Family Services

Types of DCFS Related Assistance

Youth in
College/Vocational
Training
(YIC/VT)

Youth in Scholarship
(YIS)

Community College
Payment Program
(CCPP)

Education and Training
Voucher
(ETV)

Youth in College/Vocational Training (YIC/VT) and Youth in Scholarship (YIS)

YIC/VT

- ▣ \$491 monthly
- ▣ Assistance with books **not covered by Financial Aid**

YIS

- ▣ \$491 monthly
- ▣ Assistance with books **not covered by Financial Aid**
- ▣ Medical Card
- ▣ Tuition and fee waiver at Illinois state funded universities and in-district community colleges

YIC/VT & YIS Requirements

Both programs require:

- ❑ Full time enrollment
- ❑ Documentation submitted each term/semester (August 15, January 15, June 15) to YIC/VT or YIS coordinator:
 - ❑ Grades from previous semester
 - ❑ Class schedule
- ❑ Maintaining at least a C average each term or semester
- ❑ Notification to DCFS of any changes in contact information or possible drop in classes

Youth applying to transition into YIC/VT just prior to age 21 must have completed at least one semester of a post secondary program, at full time status, with at least a 2.0 GPA, PRIOR to the semester they will turn age 21.

Community College Payment Program(CCPP)

Used ONLY when there is no financial aid for classes and only for those students who are currently in DCFS care.

- ❑ Career & Technical Education programs not part of degree program
- ❑ Some pre-credit classes (student should check with school)
- ❑ Summer classes if there is no Pell available
- ❑ High school student attending community college
- ❑ Students who either have earned too much or used up all available financial aid

Pays tuition, fees, books & supplies if financial aid is not available for class.

Students not eligible for financial aid should contact CCPP Coordinator before using.

Education & Training Voucher (ETV)

- ▣ Must currently be in DCFS care, emancipated from care at 18 or if adopted/guardianship must have been at age 16 or older at the time.
- ▣ Attend accredited school/institution.
 - ▣ www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation/search.aspx
- ▣ Maximum \$5000 per fiscal year.
- ▣ Award based on Cost of Attendance and other grants/scholarships.
- ▣ **MUST** use prior to age 21 (Federal ETV Requirement).
- ▣ Youth must be enrolled & attending and submit complete ETV application packet prior to turning 21 – and show need for funding.

Allowable Uses of ETV Funding

- ▣ Tuition and fees are first priority & must be paid **before** ETV can be used for any other category.
- ▣ Required books & supplies, equipment/uniform for program
- ▣ Transportation
- ▣ Computers – there are specific requirements to receive this and youth do not receive \$5000 towards school costs + a computer
- ▣ Housing is only allowed if an extreme hardship can be demonstrated and youth is NOT receiving other department related funding for living arrangement.

ETV funding comes after other grants & scholarships

- ▣ DCFS funds are used to supplement other funding
- ▣ Funding is NOT automatic – students must apply for funds each term/semester
- ▣ \$5000 is not paid all at one time
 - Each term/semester paid separately
 - If more than two terms per year/funding paid each term (prorated for quarters, clock hours, etc.)
- ▣ Student must meet eligibility requirements for any payment to be issued

Selecting the School to Attend

Determine the schools with a major of interest to student.

- ▣ Access www.whatsnextillinois.org for assistance
- ▣ Go to career counselor at local community college, high school

Find out the cost of each school.

- ▣ School web sites
- ▣ www.whatsnextillinois.org
- ▣ www.fafsa.ed.gov

The local community college is a great place to start.

- ▣ Lower cost
- ▣ Smaller classes
- ▣ Courses count towards the general electives at most 4 year schools (Students should check with both schools to verify which course credits will transfer)

College is Not Free - Using All Available Resources Help

- ▣ File FAFSA by January 15 each year and make sure to put 6 digit code for ANY school may attend.
- ▣ Apply for scholarships (including DCFS) – many have a deadline of March 31 each year or earlier.
- ▣ Apply for ETV or CCPP if needed for tuition, fee, book assistance.
- ▣ Housing costs covered by Pell, YIC/VT, YIS, TLP or ILO combination.
- ▣ Loans should be a last resort.

Part V

Employment, Job Training Programs and the Military



Going to Work After High School?

DCFS Employment Incentive Program Eligibility Requirements:

- ▣ DCFS guardianship of youth 17 to 21 years of age
- ▣ High school diploma or GED
- ▣ Complete Ansell Casey life skills assessment.
- ▣ Must work at least 20 hours per week or be in job skills training.

Employment Incentive Program

Benefits

- ▣ \$150 monthly payment for maximum of 12 months or age 21.
- ▣ Start-up funding for work related items.
- ▣ Funding is need-based and limited to a one-time disbursement of up to \$200.

Apprenticeships and Job Training Programs

- ▣ Research what apprenticeships or job training programs are available that meet your interests.
- ▣ Find out what the requirements for acceptance.
- ▣ Ask for the percentage of students entering the program that complete the program
- ▣ Ask for the percentage of students who complete the program find positions in the field that they chose.

Military Education Requirements

- ▣ Tier One - High School Diploma or GED and 15 college credits
- ▣ Tier Two - GEDs, home study (in some states), Certificate of Attendance, Alternative/Continuation High School, Correspondence School Diplomas, and Occupational Program Certificate (Vo/Tech). The services limit the number of Tier II candidates it will allow to enlist each year (Less than 1% in the Air Force)
- ▣ Tier Three - Individuals who are not attending high school and are neither high school graduates nor alternative credential holders. The services almost never accept a Tier 3 candidate for enlistment.

Resources

- ▣ FAFSA website

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>

- ▣ National Student Loan Data System

<http://www.nslds.ed.gov>

- ▣ US Department of Education

<http://www.ed.gov>

- ▣ Illinois Board of Higher Education

<http://www.ibhe.state.il.us>

- ▣ Youth in Care

<http://www.youthincare.illinois.gov/Default.shtml>

Resources, cont'd.

- ▣ College Zone
<http://www.collegezone.com/index.htm>
- ▣ NIU Center for Child Welfare and Education
<http://www.cedu.niu.edu/ccwe>
- ▣ The Orphan Foundation of America
<http://orphan.org>
- ▣ [College Navigator](http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/)
<http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/> -
lots of information on schools
- ▣ US Colleges, Community Colleges, & Universities in Illinois, USA (IL,USA)
<http://www.univsource.com>

Words of Wisdom

*“Education is the most powerful
weapon which you can use to
change the world.”*

Nelson Mandela

What have we learned?

